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United States he says, "Of all dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and Morality are indispensable. And let us with caution indulge the supposition that Morality can be maintained without Religion." In his letter to the governors of the states, June 8, 1783, he says, "The free cultivation of letters, the unbounded extension of commerce, the progressive refinement of manners, the growing liberality of sentiment, and above all, the pure and benign light of Revelation, have had meliorating influence on mankind, and increased the blessings of Society." That he refers to the Christian religion, and to the Christian's Bible in these passages, cannot be doubted. It should be remembered also that on the surrender of Cornwallis he ordered divine service with thanksgiving to God for the victory. That he did not commune is only evidence of his feeling of unworthiness, not of his disbelief in Christianity. But enough of fault-finding. The reader will be too much interested to lay down Mr. Ford's volume until he has read it through. The author has gotten from various sources much new matter which he has mingled with the old, so as to make a charming book. He has vindicated his hero from various aspersions of his enemies, and the searchlight he has thrown upon him has only brought out "the true George Washington" in nobler proportions. The volume is also handsomely printed and illustrated and is of permanent value in Washington literature.

WM. WIRT HENRY.

The Life, Public Services, Addresses and Letters of Elias Boudinot, LL.D., President of the Continental Congress. Edited by J. J. BOUDINOT. (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co. 1896. Two vols, pp. xvii, 419; vii, 415.)

THIS is not a biography. Although the life of a man like Elias Boudinot, who was so intimately associated with the men and events of a most important epoch in American history, would seem to afford an important theme, his modest kinswoman has contented herself with presenting—connected by a very slender thread of narrative—a collection of letters to and from Boudinot. We learn that, while residing at Elizabethtown, New Jersey, at the beginning of the Revolution, he immediately took an active part in the local committee of correspondence. A curious story is given showing the reluctance of John Witherspoon and other patriots to countenance an irrevocable breach with Great Britain. Being appointed by Congress to the position of commissary-general of prisoners, his difficulties in securing proper treatment of the Americans in New York are described by him, and in this connection he tells of a characteristic interview with General Charles Lee, who submitted to him, while a prisoner, a preposterous plan for the removal of Congress and the whole population to the western country, leaving the British in possession of the coast states. It savors somewhat of his famous "plan" which Lee

offered to Lord and General Howe in 1777. Boudinot took his seat in Congress, in July, 1778, as one of New Jersey's representatives, was reappointed in July and November, 1781, and again in 1782, when he was elected president, in which capacity he had the satisfaction and the distinguished honor of proclaiming the definite treaty of peace with Great Britain in the ensuing year. His correspondence during the congressional service is naturally of considerable interest, including, as it does, letters to and from Washington and other military men, the leaders in Congress, and statesmen abroad. He was elected a member of the first Federal Congress, and re-elected in 1791 and 1793, and gives us many inside views of the discussions in that body, and of the principal men in the government, together with much of interest relating to the social life of the new government. It will be recollected that his account of Washington's reception on his inauguration as President under the Federal Constitution is one of the best we have of that interesting event. On retiring from Congress he was anxious to devote his time and talents, which were not inconsiderable, to his private fortunes, which had become greatly impaired during his long public service, and he resumed the practice of the law in New Jersey. But he was speedily summoned from retirement, and at the request of Washington became director of the mint, an office he retained for ten years, 1795-1805. Subsequently he founded and was elected first president of the American Bible Society. He died at Burlington, N. J., October 21, 1821, having passed his eighty-first year. He was of scholarly tastes, and by marriage was doubly akin to Richard Stockton, who married his sister and whose sister he married. Hence we find in these two handsome volumes letters to and from a wide variety of persons, and not from the statesmen and politicians of the day alone. The letters given are mostly from the family archives, and heretofore unpublished, so that they are a real addition to the history of the period. The speeches are mainly reprinted from the *Annals of Congress*, but a few unpublished orations are added. Many of Mr. Boudinot's letters are to his wife, written with the utmost freedom, communicating without reserve the situation of the moment, the gossip of the day, and those trifles that often throw light on important events. A considerable portion of the work consists of extracts from some "Reminiscences" of Mr. Boudinot written by him from time to time, the MS. of which is now in the library of John Nicholas Brown, Esq., of Providence, R. I. (A document of the same kind, though perhaps not so full, is also in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.) It would enable us to form a more accurate judgment of the value of these "Reminiscences" if we knew just when and under what circumstances they were written. Various facts indicate that they were prepared many years after the occurrence of the incidents described, but while the recollection of them was still strong in the mind of the writer. His unrestrained relations are most refreshing, and often throw light on obscure points in the history of his time. Although his narrative will be regarded with caution where it runs counter to accepted history, it will nevertheless be studied with interest. As already

remarked, these volumes are not a biography, but they are uncommonly full of original material for the student of history.

WILLIAM NELSON.

The Contest over the Ratification of the Federal Constitution in the State of Massachusetts. By SAMUEL BANNISTER HARDING, A.M., Assistant Professor of History in Indiana University. [Harvard Historical Studies, Volume II.] (New York : Longmans, Green and Co. 1896. Pp. 194.)

IN this monograph the author proceeds first to examine the conditions which lay behind the decision of the Massachusetts convention of 1788. He shows by a brief survey of the political events anterior to this time that the people of the state were familiar with the idea of discussing and deciding in town meeting important constitutional questions, and had thereby gained a considerable degree of self-confidence. He finds the chief opposition to the Federal Constitution showing itself in three forms: distrust of delegated power; conflict of interests between the agricultural and the commercial sections of the state; the antagonism between the aristocratic and the democratic elements of society, which last he regards as the underlying cause of all the opposition. How, in the convention at Boston, the friends of the new constitution met their more numerous opponents with arguments and mollified them with concessions till they succeeded in winning over a sufficient number to carry their point, is especially well brought out. In his discussion of the part taken by Hancock in the contest Mr. Harding throws new light on the details of the bargain by which the governor was adroitly made to play into the hands of the Federals in return for their support in the next election, and other pledges of a less tangible character. The bibliographical note and the list of authorities cited in the appendix are especially commendable features of the monograph.

On the whole, however, there seems to be a certain lack of balance and completeness, arising apparently either from a one-sided view or from haste in preparation. In Mr. Harding's paper on "Party Struggles over the First Pennsylvania Constitution"¹ he shows very clearly two things: first, the genesis of the two parties that fought later over the Federal Constitution, as revealed in the contests over the state constitutions of 1776 and 1790, in the various sessions of the legislature and in the state elections; second, the survival of these parties after the ratification of the Federal Constitution, and the trend of their later development. In his discussion of the Massachusetts ratification there is evident need of just such a political setting as he has given to the Pennsylvania contest. Massachusetts, for instance, voted on two state constitutions, one in 1778 and one in 1780, yet we are told almost nothing as to the causes of the rejection of the one and the adoption of the other, nor of the distribution of the vote on these important measures. The vote of the

¹ *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1894*, pp. 371-402.